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THE EFFECT OF WAR AND POWER ON REPUBLICAN
LEADERSHIP 1860-1870

30

BY

WALTER RICHARD RYAN

THESIS

FOR THE

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

IN

HISTORY

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1860-1870

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THE
EFFECT OF WAR AND POWER ON REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP
1860 - 1870

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The

EFFECT OF WAR AND POWER ON REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP 1860-1870.

I

Introduction.

The history student is always confronted with a difficulty in putting himself back into the spirit of the period which he is studying. It is always troublesome to discard one's prejudices, to get the viewpoint of the person living at the time. This is particularly true in studying political history, and more especially the political history of the years 1860 to 1870. Knowing the results, as we do, we are astonished to see that the men of that day often failed to appreciate the very things which we now consider their dearest heritage to us. To us, Lincoln looms up, out of the past, next to Washington himself ! How, then, can we be expected to understand the opposition there was to his renomination in 1864? We inevitably think of Lincoln when we think of freedom. Yet facts show that he regretted having issued the "Emancipation Proclamation". For one who wishes to study the materials out of which history is made, it is well to remember, not that coming events cast their shadows before, but that events cast shadows behind them which are likely to discolor the facts.

This article works with three factors - the Republican Party, its political power, and the Civil War. Some phases of their relationships or the reactions which they had, each on the other, will be shown.

II

The Forces Back of Lincoln's Nomination and Election

Not the least of the surprises of the year 1860, was the nomination by the Chicago Convention of Abraham Lincoln as the Presidential candidate. The exact way in which this Coup d' etat was accomplished has received ample attention and need not be given here. However, there are several things in connection therewith which have not generally received sufficient attention. In the first place, when one-third of the Illinois delegates expected to vote for him only as a compliment,¹ it is difficult to see how the opportunity was taken up on the spur of the minute with such great success. When Seward was the supposedly accepted candidate, there must assuredly have been some other driving force than his personal following back of Lincoln's nomination. The widespread acceptance of a comparatively unknown man as leader must also be accounted for. The whole affair can perhaps be best explained by the character of the party in 1860 and the possibility of a Republican victory in that year.

At the time of the Chicago Convention there were in the party three distinct elements. In the first place, there was a rather large group of former Whigs who found themselves without a party in the years before 1860. In the second place, there were a number of moderate Democrats who had been alienated

1. White, The Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 102.

from their party by what they considered the extreme position of some of their leaders. Thirdly, there was a large group of liberal and radical reformers. Down to 1860, at least, this last element was the predominating group and the one which gave the party its character and made its reputation.

During the period before 1860, "revolutionary radicalism pervaded all fields, in religion, politics, and morals."² "The natural tendency was for all these various reforms to blend together, from the fact that those who were radically inclined in one direction were generally favorably disposed to reforms in all others."³ "In fact the substantial unity of all reformers as radicals was the popular impression of the time."⁴ Men such as Greeley were interested not only in abolition of slavery but in civil service reform, land reform, the brotherhood of man, and the rights of labor in general. The same is true of Julian, Giddings, Garrison, Lovejoy, and others. In fact the various reformers were generally grouped under the heading of "the isms."⁵

The Philadelphia Convention of 1856 had brot together all those reformers who were politically inclined. The temporary chairman of the convention struck the key note when he declared "they may say that we mean to concentrate and gather under our wings all the odds and ends of parties - all

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2. Smith, Political Parties and Slavery, p. 268.
 3. Ibid, p. 270.
 4. Ibid, p. 271.
 5. Ibid, p. 270.

the isms of the day. Let them come to us with all their isms."⁶ By the majority of these men the abolition of slavery was regarded simply as "the previous question, and as less abstract and far more immediately important"⁷ than the others. But "the abolition of the chattel slavery of the Southern negro was simply the introduction and prelude to the emancipation of all races from all forms of servitude."⁸

Some of the men who attended this convention did not approve of its character and work. For instance, A. K. McClure, a former Whig and later a prominent Republican, finding himself out of a party at this time, attended the convention. But it was too "wild and woolley in flavor" to suit him and his conservative friends.⁹

This radical reform character was quite generally recognized. At this time, Henry A. Wise wrote to John W. Forney "whether the peaceful state of revolution --- shall continue depends upon the issue whether Black Republicanism is strong enough to elect John C. Fremont, with all the demon isms at his heels."¹⁰ Undoubtedly the closeness of the popular vote that year jarred many into seeing something more than the "wild and woolley" character of the party. The possibilities were becoming evident and caused no little attention.¹¹

6. Proceedings of the Nat'l. Rep. Con. Speech by Judge Emmet.

7. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 325.

8. Ibid, pp. 322-3.

9. McClure, Our Presidents, p. 136.

10. Garrison, Life of W. L. Garrison, Vol. 3, p. 435.

11. McClure, Our Presidents, p. 137.

"The persistent and emphatic statement by the opposition that the Republicans were the radical party had fixed that idea in the public mind."¹² As such the reform group continued to dominate the party. Carl Schurz in a letter in fifty-eight, speaks of the control in the West by the "radical wing" or as he preferred it, the "philosophical" wing of the party.¹³ This reform reputation was very widespread. Even the "Saturday Review" published in England, had this to say as late as 1860, "Among the various parties and sections of parties which the Republicans have absorbed not the least important is the small band of ardent, speculative politicians ----- which has imbibed a tinge of socialism."¹⁴ It is thus quite evident that there was a large group in the Republican party before 1860 which was interested not only in abolition of slavery, but in all the reform questions of the day and that down to 1860 if it had not dominated the party it was reputed to have done so.

But, while the reform element had at the start been the core around which other groups collected, by 1860 the Whig and the Democratic members also constituted a large portion of the party and what these two latter lacked in publicity they made up for in astuteness and political experience.

Between 1856 and 1860 the Whigs thruout the country

12. Rhodes, History of United States, Vol. 2, p. 502.

13. Schurz, Writings, Vol. I, p. 35.

14. Saturday Review, Dec. 1, 1860. Quoted in Living Age, Jan. 19, 1861.

saw the final collapse of their organizations. This left them without party affiliations and it was necessary to find new ones. To a large extent these came into the Republican Party. McClure mentions that he and other conservative Whigs of Pennsylvania finally drifted into the party because of the Democratic position on the slavery question; altho they did not favor the Republican attitude either. He also mentions that some of the more conservative Whigs preferred to and did join the Democrats.¹⁵

Events between 1856 and 1860 tended likewise to "alienate a large portion of the intelligent element of the Democracy."¹⁶ Many of these such as the German elements in the Northwest were more nearly akin to the original reform group than the Whigs had been.

There is one thing to note particularly about these additions. For the most part they were not of the reform character. They sympathised with few of the questions such as woman suffrage, rights of labor, etc., except the slavery question; and in so far as they were against slavery, it was because they could not tolerate the Democratic position than that they favored the Republican position. By some of the Republicans this was clearly recognized. Julian, for instance, points out that "the position of the Free Soilers was radically different (from the Republican Whigs and Democrats). They opposed slavery upon principle, and irrespective of any compact or

15. McClure, Our Presidents, pp. 145-6.

16. Ibid, p. 154.

compromise; and altho they rejoiced at the popular condemnation of the perfidy which had repealed it, they regarded it as a false issue."¹⁷

As may have been expected, with the growing importance of the party and the almost assured victory in 1860, there was attracted to it many who were not at all interested in the questions at stake but who were rather there for the possible spoils.

Such was the changing character of the elements of the party. What effect did this growth have on the purposes or principles and leadership of the party? In the first place, they limited the purpose of the party to the slavery question and that as the opposition to the latest outrage of the slave holders and not to the question of human rights.¹⁸ Between 1856 and 1860 the party became gradually more and more under the dominance of the conservative elements which were joining the party.

In several of the states such as Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania there was a decided conscious effort to change the purposes of the party. This was much resented by some of the older Republicans. Julian in speaking of conditions in his state said "border ruffian outrages and elaborate disclaimers of abolitionism were the regular staple of our orators, who openly declared that the Republican party was a 'white man's

17. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 137.

18. Ibid, p. 167.

party.' Anti-slavery speakers like Clay and Burlingame were studiously kept out of southern Indiana, where the teachings of Republicanism were especially needed."¹⁹ He likewise speaks of it as having occurred again in fifty-eight. Speaking of the situation in Congress, in fifty-nine, Giddings said that the very men who had been elected on the avowal of Republican principles urged their repudiation. Some men went so far as to say the party had no principles.²⁰ In accounting for this situation, he sums up briefly the opinion of reformers like himself. He said "Men who had long acted with the Whig party, under the conviction that its policy and principles were correct, found themselves abandoned by their associates with whom they had long acted and were constrained to unite with Republicans or remain isolated from political society. Coming into the Republican organization, they sought to change the party with whom they united rather than admit they had been wrong in former times. Another class were office seekers. They had opposed the Republican organization until they saw its success was inevitable. They then joined it, ---." ²¹ And Julian adds that many of "the Democratic bolters" who came into the Republican party "were only half converted."²²

Thus down to the Chicago Convention the Republican party was composed of three rather distinct elements all

19. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 167.

20. Giddings, History of the Rebellion, p. 430.

21. Ibid, p. 443.

22. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 153.

as early
as 1860

partially united on one question. The radical reform group gave the reputation and tone to the party but it was actually decreasing in influence within the party. But it was still a vital force. The leadership and dominance were gradually coming under the control of former Whigs and Democrats who were rather conservative. Every one in the party expected a presidential victory in 1860.

"Seward and Chase were its foremost men. Next to them in rank were Sumner, Fessenden, Hale, Collamer, Wade, Banks, and Sherman. Lincoln was not counted even in the second rank until after the joint debates with Douglas."²³ Seward was the logical candidate and the generally expected one. In fact, "two-thirds of all the delegates elected to that convention were friends of Seward and expected to vote for him."²⁴ But Seward's "irrepressible conflict" speech had been widely heralded and the growing conservatism of the party re-acted against him. The leaders would have found it hard to line up the rank and file for him which did not go so far on the question. "There were indispensable states --- which many people believed Seward could not carry. In Pennsylvania, Indiana, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, he was accounted too radical for the temper of the electors." Even "Illinois was reckoned doubtful."²⁵ There was an undercurrent in the

23. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 102.

24. McClure, Our Presidents, p. 155.

25. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 102.

party among the conservative groups which sought a candidate more acceptable to their electors. Various men were possibilities but were discarded for different reasons. "A conservative candidate of good repute and sufficiently well known to the public, seemed to be the desideratum."²⁶ But the radical element had to be kept in mind also by these manipulators. Bates, who was considered a very good possibility by the conservatives had to be discarded because Koerner, "the most influential German in Illinois" advised "that Bates could not command the German vote."²⁷ In fact, after having made himself acquainted with the contents of fifty German Republican newspapers, Koerner found that, as first choice, they were unanimous for either Seward or Fremont but would support Lincoln or Chase.²⁸ Now three of these it was that could not be elected if nominated. Lincoln, coming from one of the doubtful states, comparatively unknown out of his state, characterized by Whig conservatism, was considered as a very good possibility. The big question was how to secure his nomination. From the start of the National Convention, Indiana was in favor of Lincoln. After a complimentary vote to Cameron, Pennsylvania supported him, too. This latter was not secured without cost, because later Lincoln felt bound to give Cameron a place in the cabinet due to the promises of his friends who had been in charge of his nomination. The only real opponent in the balloting

26. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 103.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

was Seward, and as between these two most of the conservative votes were given to Lincoln. By the men concerned, Lincoln's nomination was generally understood to have been a matter of expediency. McClure, who was with the Pennsylvania delegation and helped convert some of the Seward men to Lincoln, said that they voted for him "not because they loved Seward less, but because they loved Republican success more."²⁹ Greeley, who did not himself favor Seward's nomination later, rather rhetorically declared, "know, O shallow pate ! that Lincoln was nominated for the one sufficient reason that he could obtain more electoral votes than any of his competitors."³⁰ Several years later one of the Republican magazines, altho then opposed to Seward, stated "Seward only failed to become President because he was supposed to represent his party too faithfully to command the suffrages of certain doubtful states holding the balance of power."³¹

But Lincoln's nomination was not without opposition. There were certain elements who thot that by taking Lincoln the original doctrines of the party were being thrown overboard, and that it smacked too much of the former methods of treating the slavery question, against which the formation of the Republican party had been a protest. "More than one-third of all the delegates who voted for Lincoln in that convention did it in sincere sorrow because compelled to abandon their great

29. McClure, Our Presidents, p. 156.

30. Greeley, Essay on Lincoln, p. 34.

31. The Nation, Sept. 20, 1866. p. 233.

leader for the sake of victory."³² One member who had been associated with the party from the start said "His nomination had been secured through the diplomacy of conservative Republicans, whose morbid dread of 'abolitionism' unfitted them as I believed, for leadership in the battle with slavery which had now become inevitable." The agreement between the Lincoln men and the delegates from Indiana and Pennsylvania whereby Caleb B. Smith and Simon Cameron were to be given cabinet positions likewise met their condemnation.³³ Others believed Lincoln's "early training and habits of thought had led him to believe the slaveholder had some or legal right to the services of his slave; and although an eloquent advocate of liberty, it appeared difficult for him to believe that the right of life and liberty had been bestowed on black men equally with the white race."³⁴ Koerner in his "Memoirs" says that Mr. Evarts and Carl Schurz were both deeply affected and did not disguise their regret.³⁵

But all in all, while many of the radical groups were opposed to Lincoln's nomination, they did not despair. Having failed to get a candidate who measured up to their ideals on the slavery question, they felt that their position was so logical that he too must needs come to it shortly. Giddings, who is generally reputed to have been one of the most radical

32. McClure, Our Presidents, p. 157.

33. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 182.

34. Giddings, History of the Rebellion, p. 445.

35. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 91.

of the Republicans, said, "but from his (Lincoln's) candor, his frankness, and integrity, the anti-slavery men had confidence that he would respect their principles in due time."³⁶ Julian who, because of his doubts visited Lincoln at Springfield, said, "When Seward was defeated many an anti-slavery man poured out his tears over the result, while deploring or denouncing the conservatism of old Whiggery, which thus sacrificed the ablest man in the party, and the real hero of its principles. Time, however, led these men to reconsider their estimate both of Seward and Lincoln, and convinced them that the action of the convention, after all, was for the best."³⁷

While the radical elements of the party opposed and deplored the nomination of Lincoln, the majority of them, even the most radical, did all they could to promote his election. For instance, Lovejoy, whom Lincoln had thot too radical to be elected in fifty-eight, "urged the radical abolitionists to support" him. He told them how he viewed the situation by the use of a story. He said there was a man walking to Chicago who was overtaken by a man in a wagon. They were both going in the same direction for a short way. The man in the wagon asked the other to ride. The man in the wagon was the Republican party, the man walking was the abolitionist. Lovejoy thot it would be foolish not to take a "lift" even if it did not

36. Giddings, History of the Rebellion, p. 446.

37. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 177.

take them all the way they wished to go.³⁸ Even Julian who was extremely opposed to his nomination, said, "I --- zealously supported him in the canvass."³⁹ In short, there was a general feeling among the radicals that while they could not get all they wanted, they felt they could get more from supporting Lincoln than by doing anything else.

Carl Schurz, who was also against the nomination, delivered many speeches in favor of this election. These were widely distributed and were characterized as "the most effective ---- under all circumstances."⁴⁰ "As it turned out, among all the friends and admirers of Lincoln, none were more ardent and eager than the German Republicans," said one who was in a position to know.⁴¹

In fact, the canvass for Lincoln was conducted by the ablest men in the party. "Seward acted most nobly. He made speeches in New York, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois. He even went clear to Kansas, and spoke in St. Louis to an immense audience."⁴²

In Pennsylvania the Republicans won largely because of the conservative character of the candidate. The conservative character of the party was so strong in that state "that the name Republican had to be discarded. Curtin was elected governor (in October) as the candidate of the 'people's party'

38. McClean Co. Hist. Soc. Trans. Vol. 3, p. 71.

39. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 181.

40. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 107. Letter, H.G. McPike to Trumbull, June 29.

41. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 101.

42. Ibid.

and the delegates to the Chicago Convention represented only that organization."⁴³ Even with this concession "in Philadelphia ----- nearly the whole commercial and financial interests were arrayed against Lincoln, because they regarded the Republican party as disturbers of national tranquillity and of all the interests of trade."⁴⁴ It is interesting to note that Blaine considered that the tariff plank in the platform had much to do with the election in this state. He admits, however, that elsewhere it was often not "even mentioned."⁴⁵

In Indiana, the Republicans were also united under the title of "people's party " due to the conservative character of the men comprising the party in that state.

Giddings of Ohio declares that in his part of the country "hundreds of thousands voted with the Republican party under the expectation of success, caring little for the slave."⁴⁶

The results of the election were differently interpreted by the various groups in the party. The Chicago platform had laid down the principle that the territories were naturally free and could not become slave thru any action whatsoever, territorial or Congressional. To many of the radicals, the election with such a position was ample proof of the support of their position. One said "the voice of the people had been uttered in favor of equal rights, and equal justice to all men.

43. McClure, Our Presidents, p. 177.

44. Ibid.

45. Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, Vol. I, p. 207.

46. Giddings, History of the Rebellion, p. 446.

They had emphatically repudiated the heathenish dogma that 'black men have no rights that white men are bound to respect.'"⁴⁷ To them their argument was very convincing. They argued that, in as much as the exclusion of slavery from the territories put the nation's brand on it and limited it to the states now having it, that the platform really gave the death blow to slavery, if carried out.⁴⁸ It was true that it might linger a long time, but it would never recover. There was a general feeling thru the South, too, that while the provision was not strongly abolition in theory, in practice and with time it would be so. One of the conservative Republicans says "it was well understood in the South that it menaced the safety of slavery even where it was then undisputed."⁴⁹ The Democrats thruout the campaign had charged the Republicans with being abolitionists. Such men as Julian, Giddings, and others thot the charge was "by no means wanting in essential truth."⁵⁰ They were only too glad to be so branded. Others, however, did not take it so calmly. Lincoln, for instance, was called upon to deny the charge and did so very vehemently. He said "Republican speakers and newspapers not only never advocated abolition of slavery, but are constantly refuting the charge that they are radical abolitionists."⁵¹

47. Giddings, History of the Rebellion, p. 448.

48. Julian, Political Recollections, pp. 223-4.

49. McClure, Our Presidents, p. 176.

50. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 224.

51. McClean Co. Hist. Soc. Trans. Vol. 3, p. 70.

III

The Conservative Policy of the Administration

The period between Lincoln's election and his inauguration was really one of the most critical during this whole time. As usual, it was a sort of inter-regnum when neither wished to do nor, for that matter, could do very much. At first there seems to have been on the part of some of the Republicans, an effort to stand by their guns and to resist any attempt at conciliation. "A dispatch to the 'Herald' (N.Y.) dated Washington, Dec. 4, says: 'The Republican Senators caucused yesterday, and were unanimous against making any compromise whatever with men or states who are in the act of violating the Constitution and the laws of their country. They assert that they have appealed to the country upon the principles of the Chicago platform, that the people have indorsed them and their principles by electing Lincoln and Hamlin, in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution. ----- The compromise proposition of Thurlow Weed was unequivocally denounced as unwise, impolitic, unjust, and anti-Republican as a whole and in all its parts.'"¹ But this situation did not last very long. Nothing positive was done and it was hard to avoid discussion or action one way or the other.

It was a period of drifting when decided and prompt action was needed. This drifting along, this feeling of not

1. Harper's Weekly, Dec. 15, 1860. p. 791.

being prepared to act is undoubtedly one of the causes of the panic which spread thru the North, often resulting in the most abject proposals of submission to the South, on the part of those who during the campaign had been most vociferous in the assertion of the Republican doctrines. As one who was there in Congress at the time has concisely put it, "the Republicans, notwithstanding their great victory, so recoiled from the thought of sectional strife that for the sake of peace they were ready to forego their demand for Congressional prohibition of slavery in the territories. They were willing to abide by the Dred Scott decision and the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave law. They even proposed a Constitutional amendment which would have made slavery perpetual in the Republic."² Lincoln himself authorized Weed to put forward such an amendment.³ The mere threat of secession seemed to have paralyzed many Republicans at the North who came soon to be willing to grant anything. As early as December tenth, even Lincoln thought things were going too far, because he wrote to Trumbull at Washington, "Let there be no compromise on extending slavery. ----- The dangerous ground - that into which some of our friends have a hankering to run - is Popular Sovereignty. Have none of it. Stand firm."⁴ On December 18th was introduced the "Crittenden Compromise, which practically surrendered everything to slavery." "This only

2. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 180.

3. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 112.

4. Ibid, p. 111. Lincoln to Trumbull, Dec. 10, 1860.

failed in the Senate by one vote, and this failure resulted from the non-voting of six rebel Senators."⁵ The "Crittenden Compromise" was favored by many of the conservative Republicans. The so-called "Peace Congress" which contained many Republicans,⁶ "agreed upon a series of measures covering substantially the same ground as the Crittenden Compromise."⁷ Thurlow Weed, who was later intrusted by President Lincoln with the introduction of three resolutions to meet the situation,⁸ favored the measure. Mr. Seward was known to be in very close association with him and so "was called upon to know if he indorsed the course of Mr. Weed in the matter referred to, and Mr. Seward replied that he knew nothing concerning Mr. Weed's views about a compromise until he saw them in print and that he did not indorse them."⁹ Nevertheless a Republican magazine some time later said, "the first serious manifestation of warlike tendencies at the South cooled all Mr. Seward's zeal for liberty. Taking into view his close affiliation with Mr. Weed and his subsequent course, there can be no reasonable doubt that Mr. Weed's endorsement of the 'Crittenden Compromise' ----- was really a feeler put forward on behalf of his chief; and that Mr. Seward would have acceded to any scheme for the joint preservation of

5. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 185.

6. From Illinois such men as Ex. Gov. J. Wood, Judge Stephen Logan, John Palmer, C. B. Cook, and Thomas Turner were sent to it. --- Cole, Era of the Civil War, p. 258.

7. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 186.

8. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 112.

9. Harper's Weekly, Dec. 15, 1860, p. 791.

the Union and slavery to which he could have secured the assent of a considerable portion of his party."¹⁰

There was, however, much opposition to the acceptance of such a measure. It was debated from December 18th to March 2nd. Senator Trumbull, who was a close associate of Lincoln, gave a strong speech against it on the night of March 2nd. During this crisis he was receiving hundreds of letters from his constituents, nearly all of which urged him to stand firm.¹¹ One of them wrote, "We want the Constitution as it is, the Union as the Fathers framed it, and the Chicago Platform. And we will support no man and no party that surrenders these or any portion of them."¹² Another wrote, "Are our Republican friends going to concede away dignity, Constitution, Union, laws, and justice? If they do, I am their enemy now and forever. I may not have much influence, but I will tear down the Republican party and erect another in its stead. Before I would buy the South, by compromise and concessions, to get what is the people's due, I would die, rot, and be forgotten, willingly."¹³

Even in Illinois, however, where this apparently wide spread insistence on maintaining of Republican principles was so evident, there were strong forces at work urging conciliation. Lincoln, while he did not personally favor peace commissioners, was compelled to acquiesce in the appointment in order to

10. The Nation, Sept. 20, 1866, p. 233.

11. White, The Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 117.

12. Ibid, p. 118. J. M. Sturtevant (Pres. of Ill. College, Jacksonville) to Trumbull, Jan. 30.

13. Ibid, p. 119. W. H. Herndon to Trumbull, Feb. 9, 1861.

be able to name stanch men as delegates. It was feared that some of the "weak-kneed brethern would have united with the democracy, and would have given them sufficient strength to have passed the resolutions appointing by the General Assembly,"¹⁴ and this would have meant men more favorable to concession.

In the East this attempt to beat a retreat was most widespread. The New York "Tribune" was the first to align itself against coercion and thereby earned the contempt of many of the radicals. Julian indignantly cites a whole list of such offenders. Among these were the New York "Herald," the Albany "Argus," the Albany "Evening Journal," and "many other leading organs of Republicanism." In the opinion of radicals, this conciliatory policy of the Republican papers "necessarily gave powerful aid and comfort to" the secession movement.¹⁵ Senator Trumbull was of somewhat the same opinion, for in writing to E. C. Larned, who had sent him the compromise resolutions of a Chicago meeting, he sent the following reply. "Had the Republican party from the start as one man refused to entertain or talk compromises and concessions and given it to be understood that the Union was to be maintained and the laws enforced at all hazards, I do not believe secession would ever have obtained the strength it now has."¹⁶

Many of the radical Republicans not only did not favor the agitation for conciliatory measures, but felt that

14. Cole, Era of the Civil War, p. 258. E. Peck to Trumbull, Feb. 2.

15. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 185.

16. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 113. Trumbull to Larned, Jan. 16.

some positive action in the opposite direction should have been taken. Giddings wrote in rather a plaintive tone, "the rebellion had progressed thus far (Ga., Ala., Miss., La., and Fla., had resigned their seats) at the close of the thirty-sixth Congress, yet the Republicans of that body made no movement, passed no law, provided no means for suppressing hostilities."¹⁷

In many parts of the country there was a general feeling growing during this time, that, back of it all, the radical Republicans and abolitionists were the real cause of the trouble. This engendered on the part of those who were in favor of compromise, a bitter antipathy to the radicals and abolitionists. Their vehement rejection of the Crittenden Compromise was not of a nature to soften this feeling. It is said that great meetings were held in Philadelphia and New York which strongly condemned the abolitionists.¹⁸ Many of the Republican leaders were opposed to the abolitionist and radical members of the party. This is clearly brot out in the organization of Lincoln's cabinet. Only a limited number of them would be tolerated in it, and these because of their prominence and following rather than because of their principles.¹⁹ As it was, four of the members, "Messrs. Cameron, Bates, Smith, and Blair were regarded as more conservative in character."²⁰

17. Giddings, History of the Rebellion, p. 461.

18. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 185.

19. Cf. Welles, Diary, Vol. 1, pp. 81-2; Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, pp. 114-9; White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, pp. 139-54.

20. Giddings, History of the Rebellion, p. 463.

Only three were considered as radical. Koerner reports that "even the day before the inauguration a strong effort was made to change the cabinet as regards Mr. Chase. He was present when "some very prominent men from Ohio, Judge Carter for one, tried to persuade Mr. Lincoln to substitute some other man from Ohio for Mr. Chase. The entire conservative element thot him too radical."²¹

Mr. Lincoln during the period between his election and his inauguration refrained from giving any public expression of his position on the situation. "His sentiments as declared in his speech at the Cooper Institute, in his debates with Judge Douglas, and in acceptance of the nomination for President on the Chicago platform" were "referred to as embracing the principles and policy of his administration."²²

It was generally known that Seward was to be appointed Secretary of State. "Under these circumstances he was expected to foreshadow the policy of the incoming President; and great interest was manifest to hear him."²³ On the 12th of January, he spoke on President Buchanan's message. To many of the radical Republicans who had supported him zealously for the nomination and who had approved his speeches in favor of Lincoln's nomination, "which considering the state of the public feeling in 1860, were violently radical,"²⁴ his statements at this time

21. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 116.

22. Harper's Weekly, Nov. 24, 1860. p. 743.

23. Giddings, History of the Rebellion, p. 459.

24. The Nation, Sept. 20, 1866. p. 233.

were like a slap in the face. The speech caused general despair among those who insisted on no compromise. To them it looked like a return to the old state of affairs where the true principles of the Declaration of Independence were to be ignored.

"Many ----- entertained gloomy apprehensions that they were once more to be deceived; that the new administration would surrender the doctrines of the party and become subservient to the slave power."²⁵ In fact the policy as given out by Mr. Seward did not differ much from that of many Northern Democrats.

Between Lincoln's election and his inauguration there was thus, first of all, a general movement among the conservative Republicans to conciliate the South, regardless of the concessions necessary to do this. This was favored by some of the men who had hitherto been considered radical and who had been supported by the radicals, notably Mr. Seward. Many Republican newspapers protested against the use of coercion. In the main there was a radical group, especially in the Northwest, which opposed all compromise measures. Such men came very much into disrepute with certain Republican leaders. The policy of conciliation as outlined did not differ materially from either the old Whig position or that of the Democrats of the North.

The inauguration was looked forward to with fear and misgiving by a great majority of the North, both Democrats and Republicans, conservatives and radicals. Some thought it would be too radical; others were sure it would be too conservative.

25. Giddings, History of the Rebellion, p. 462.

As a matter of fact, when it came it was generally well received thruout the North. Each group looked at some part of it and thot it saw foreshadowed there the thing it desired. There was, however, ~~among~~ the radical group a feeling that it was too conciliatory. A Southern writer states that "Mr. Lincoln's own party was displeased with it; and the Republican newspapers declared that its tone was deprecatory and even apologetic."²⁶ To a certain extent this was true, but it is well to note what one of the most radical Republicans of long standing has to say about it. Lincoln's "inaugural was just what his friends who were best acquainted with him expected. They understood his positions, and in public and in private insisted that the logic of events would bring his mind to the full appreciation of the crimes of slavery."²⁷ The position of the radicals is thus shown to be one of hope for the future rather than approval of his stand at that time. Then too, they figuratively breathed a sigh of relief to think it was as firm as it was. The recent widespread conservative agitation for compromise and concessions, coupled with assaults on all abolitionists and radicals, had caused them to expect something worse.²⁸

By the conservative Republicans, it was well received. They looked at the conciliatory character.

26. Pollard, The Lost Cause, p. 104.

27. Giddings, History of the Rebellion, p. 463.

28. Ibid, p. 462.

"The Northern Democrats had no violent disapproval to express."²⁹ In fact, Douglas at several passages is reported to have commented, "good, good." Nevertheless, shortly afterward he and many other Democrats protested very vehemently against it as going too far.³⁰

Between the inauguration and the attack on Fort Sumter, just a little over a month, the confidence of the radicals secured by the inaugural speech was being slowly replaced by a distrust of the administration. Action, prompt and decided, was their desire. The lack of action had been one of their chief grievances against Buchanan; and yet here, men of their own party were carrying on the same policy. Julian draws this scathing denunciation of this policy. "The President himself," he wrote, "not only still hoped, but believed, that there would be no war; and notwithstanding all the abuse that had been heaped upon Mr. Buchanan by the Republicans for his feeble and vacillating course and especially his denial of the right of the government to coerce the recusant states, the policy of the new administration, up to the attack upon Sumter, was identical with that of his predecessor."³¹

Gustave Koerner says that "great dissatisfaction prevailed, and the press in the Northwest was loud in its denunciation of Lincoln and Seward."³² The position of the President

29. Pollard, The Lost Cause, p. 104.

30. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 118.

31. Julian, Political Recollections, pp. 188-9.

32. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 119.

as stated in Mr. Seward's official letter to Mr. Adams dated April 10, 1861, drew forth considerable condemnation.³³ This discontent in the party was becoming rather evident even to Southerners; one of whom said "his apparent vacillation was producing disaffection in the Black Republican party, and the clamor of their disappointment was plainly heard in Washington."³⁴ Even Koerner, who was a staunch supporter of Lincoln, from first to last, admits that when news came of the firing upon Fort Sumter, it "was almost a relief to Union men."³⁵ They felt that the administration could no longer delay after this and that some decided action would necessarily have to be taken. There was rejoicing over this fact.

But the outbreak of hostilities failed to materially lessen the differences existing within the party. It was the ----- policy of the administration to make the war merely one of saving the Union. As early as December, 1860, Lincoln had proposed this as a rallying cry in case of hostilities.³⁶ The statements of Secretaries Seward and Smith that slavery would in no way be affected by the war "naturally provoked criticism, and angered the anti-slavery feeling of the loyal states."³⁷

Even after the battle of Bull Run, both Houses of Congress declared that the purpose of the war was not the

33. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 189.

34. Pollard, The Lost Cause, p. 104.

35. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 119.

36. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, pp. 112-3. Lincoln to Trumbull, Dec. 24, 1860.

37. Julian, Political Recollections, pp. 213-4.

"conquest" or the "subjugation" of the South, nor the overthrow of their "established institutions," but to "preserve the Union," and that "as soon as these objects are accomplished the war ought to cease."³⁸ As late as August, 1862, Lincoln wrote to Greeley, "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union and is not either to save or destroy slavery."³⁹ "To anti-slavery men this seemed like an apology for the war, and a most ill-timed revival of the policy of conciliation which had been so uniformly and contemptuously spurned by the enemy."⁴⁰ They maintained that to declare one of the purposes of the war the abolition of slavery would materially strengthen the war policy.

If it was impolitic to declare the war a crusade against slavery there was at least no need to make it one for preserving the institution. To them it seemed like a cold-blooded abandonment of the rights of humanity as laid down in the Declaration of Independence and incorporated in the Chicago platform. It was not until very much later that the conservative elements of the party admitted that slavery was the real cause of the rebellion.⁴¹

From the very beginning of the administration there was a strong effort made by Lincoln and the conservative members

38. Julian, Political Recollections, pp. 197-8.

39. Nicolay and Hay, Complete Works, Vol. 2, p. 227.

40. Julian, Political Recollections, pp. 197-8.

41. McPherson, History of the Rebellion, pp. 405-9. Speeches by Wm. Dennison and Breckinridge at the Union Con. 1864. Also letter of acceptance by Johnson.

of the party to attract to their support men who, while they may have been opposed to the preelection stand of the party, were in favor of preserving the Union, even to the use of force. Especially did it endeavor to attract such men in the doubtful or border states. In a short time, this "Border State Policy" as it came to be called was one of the most characteristic of the administration. It was very successful in attracting to its support a large number of Union Democrats who later were called War Democrats. This group included such men as Grant, Logan, Sheridan, Dix, Sherman, Butler, and others. Lincoln, himself, in a letter to Schurz gave rather a clear presentation of the problem. "The plain facts as they appear to me," he wrote, "are these. The administration came into power, very largely in a minority of the popular vote. ----- The war came. The administration could not even start in this, without assistance outside of its party. It was mere nonsense to suppose a minority could put down a majority in rebellion."⁴² Altho Lincoln thus designates the outbreak of the rebellion as the beginning of the Border State Policy, some Republicans found traces of it farther back. Koerner, in writing to his wife on the very day of the inauguration, foreshadows the policy. He wrote, "We do not like the cabinet as a whole, but Lincoln was forced into some of the appointments. The Union men in the Border States declared to him that they must give

42. Schurz, Writings, Vol. 1, pp. 212-13. Lincoln to Schurz, Nov. 10, 1862.

up the fight if the cabinet was made too radical."⁴³ Others saw it in the inaugural address.⁴⁴ However, it was not until the distribution of the patronage that the policy became evident to many. The commissioning of many War Democrats for high places in the Army was but another illustration. The majority of the radicals saw the most pronounced example of it in the declared purpose of the war, in the "capture of fugitive slaves and their return to their rebel masters by our commanding generals," and in the "reiterated and gratuitous disavowals of 'abolitionism' by prominent Republicans."⁴⁵ The question of the distribution of offices, while it bothered some, did not excite the ire of the radicals nearly so much as the disregard of the slavery question by the party. In July the President called a special session of Congress. "The unavoidableness of the war was now absolute, and the tone of the President's message was far bolder and better than that of his inaugural. The policy of tenderness towards slavery, however, still revealed itself, and called forth the criticism of the more radical Republicans."⁴⁶

Next to the questions as to the causes and purposes of the war, the thing which caused most discontent in the Republican ranks was the prosecution of the war. From choice or necessity, or both, the administration had placed in command of the Federal forces men who, for the most part, had been

43. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 118.

44. Pollard, The Lost Cause, p. 104.

45. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 196.

46. Ibid, p. 195.

connected with the Democratic party as late as the last election. Such men as McClean, Sherman, Dix, Logan, Grant, and Butler were all Democrats when they went into the Army.

The defeat at Bull Run demonstrated, to many, the inability of these generals. The delay in moving forward when the men seemed to be all ready, caused rampant criticism of the methods of carrying on the war. A Congressional Committee, composed of three members of the Senate and four members of the House, was chosen on the nineteenth of December to inquire into the conduct of the war. This "committee had its birth in the popular demand for a more vigorous prosecution of the war, and less tenderness toward slavery,"⁴⁷ is the statement of one of the members. This committee was severe in its criticisms both of the prosecution of the war and of the generals who were at the head of the forces. They particularly condemned McClellan and demanded his removal. It demanded the appointment of more vigorous men, men who were known to be in sympathy with the Republican party. Stanton, when he came into the cabinet, seconded the committee in its protests.⁴⁸ General Schurz, who naturally favored a vigorous prosecution of the war wrote to Lincoln that men who failed to measure up to the wishes of the Republicans should be removed, and others appointed who would get results. He strongly protested against keeping men in power

47. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 201.

48. Welles, Diary, Vol. 1, pp. 118-19.

for fear of offending the war Democrats, when they could be replaced by better men.⁴⁹

While the prosecution of the war was considered too lenient, when applied to rebels, there was prevalent a belief that war conditions as laid down in the North were entirely too severe. Lincoln soon after the outbreak of hostilities suspended the writ of habeas corpus. There were those of the Republicans who thot the administration might better and more advantageously direct all its energies toward defeating the enemy rather than arbitrarily arresting persons in the loyal states and suppressing newspapers far away from the zone of hostilities. Some were prone to question the power to do so. Some questioned the method of doing it. Others (and there were many original Republicans in this group, such as Hale) questioned the desirability of ever suspending the writ. In Congress there was considerable debate over the matter. In the Senate the debate was long and protracted. The question first came up when Trumbull introduced a resolution of inquiry as to what law the executive had based the suspension on. Trumbull at this time and during the whole war was one of the most ardent advocates of civil liberty. Hale, Fessenden, Henderson, Trumbull, and others were of the opinion that there was not "the slightest warrant of law for any such proceeding."⁵⁰ Dixon, Fessenden, Browning, Wilson, and others, however, thot the "necessity of the case" was sufficient to justify suspension.

49. Schurz, Writings, Vol. 1, p. 216. Lincoln to Schurz. Nov. 20, 1862.

50. Cong. Globe, Vol. 32, p. 95. Speech by Fessenden.

Those who opposed suspension wanted "to know whether or not we are fighting for the Constitution, and for Constitutional liberty by law."⁵¹ This group for the most part was willing to make the suspension legal but with the qualification that men arrested in this manner should be released if not indicted after the first meeting of the Grand Jury in their district. A measure providing this was finally passed. But, until it was, these men saw the danger to which unlimited suspension might go. They pointed out that any Senator or Representative might be arrested and detained for an unlimited time.

The suppression of newspapers caused even more opposition. The suppression of the Chicago Times was an occasion on which many Republicans, such as Trumbull and Palmer, united with the Democrats in their protest. The suppression of the New York World and Journal of Commerce was a similar occasion in the East. This discontent was very extensive and at times aroused the whole country.⁵² At the time of the Cleveland Convention there was nothing which received quite the attention by its members as this usurpation of civil liberties by the administration. In the various calls issued it is mentioned as one of the leading motives.⁵³

We have noticed above that there was a large group of "come outers" or radical reformers in the party between 1856

51. Cong. Globe, Vol. 32, p. 94. Speech by Trumbull.

52. American Annual Cyclopaedia, 1864, pp. 389-94.

53. McPherson, History of the Rebellion, p. 410.

and 1860, and that these men continued to be with the party after that date. In the light of the multiplicity of reforms in which these men were interested, one may reasonably wonder whether or not this period was characterized by the enactment of radical reform legislation. For the most part, such questions as prohibition, woman suffrage, the rights of labor, and civil service reform were entirely ignored during the war period. A few, such as education, land reform, and negro emancipation did secure some attention. In case of education and land reform, only the bills already prepared were passed, nothing new was done. This general ignoring of the reform measures may be accounted for under two main reasons. In the first place, the war loomed up as the biggest thing of the day. All the energies of Congress were absorbed in the measures directly pertaining to its prosecution. In the second place, a hard fight was necessary to accomplish what reform they did secure.

It was necessary to urge the administration to prosecute the war vigorously. The radicals thot it lacked decision in its war policy. The question of whether or not a state could be coerced was not of as much importance to them then, as that the war should be successfully fought. "They believed in a vigorous prosecution of the war, and were sick of the 'never-ending gabble about the sacredness of the Constitution."⁵⁴ They felt that if they did not direct all their efforts toward urging the

54. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 215.

administration on, the war would fall thru. This did not leave much time for reforms. The time that was left was, for the most part, taken up with the slavery question.

Scarcely had the Republicans been elected when, even among the Republicans, there was agitation for the "Crittenden Compromise." The abolitionists were bitterly opposed to any such plan. The Chicago platform had declared that the territories were naturally free and that slavery could not be put in them even by act of Congress. Yet this was an attempt to make slave all the territory below 36'40". For a time at least, it looked as if the Republicans would weaken and a hard fight was necessary. The next proposal which they had to meet was the proposed thirteenth amendment. This would have prohibited Congress from ever interfering with slavery in the states. Technically this was in agreement with the Chicago platform. Lincoln himself drew up the proposal for such an amendment.⁵⁵ But the abolitionists looked at the spirit of the platform. To them such an amendment "would have made slavery perpetual in the Republic."⁵⁶ The position of the radicals on this illustrates their general position. They joined with the conservatives in what might be considered very conservative ground but actually they never gave up hope of gaining a more advanced position. Where the measure blocked further action they refused to act.

55. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 112.

56. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 180.

The abolitionists had tried to have the war fought as a war of freedom but in this they were not successful. The Border State Policy of the administration was a continual check to the abolitionists. It seemed to them that too many men who had sympathized with slavery were left in offices with control of the patronage and that "their influence was at all times exerted in favor of" slavery.⁵⁷

In the summer of 1862 Fremont issued a proclamation which freed the slaves of rebels in his territory. This was decidedly pleasing to the abolitionists and radicals, who thot that at last things were moving their way. They saw in it the beginning of a "new war policy" and they were thoroughly in favor of it. Furthermore it seemed to them that "it was greeted by the people of the Northern states with inexpressible gladness and thanksgiving." Even such papers as the "Boston Post," the "Detroit Free Press," the "Chicago Times," and the "New York Herald" are said to have approved it.⁵⁸ Koerner says that "it created the widest enthusiasm on the part of the ardent Republicans, particularly among the Germans" but "it was strongly condemned by the conservative Union men in St. Louis, in the State of Missouri, and in the Border States generally."⁵⁹ Lincoln considered that the proclamation went farther than could be justified under the laws of Congress and so, after Fremont

57. Giddings, History of the Rebellion, p. 464.

58. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 198.

59. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 167.

had refused to modify his order, the President canceled it. This was in line with Lincoln's conservative policy on the slavery question and his Border State Policy.⁶⁰

The results of this action were very disastrous according to the radicals. Julian, for instance, says, "From this revocation of the new war policy, dated pro-slavery reaction which at once followed. It balked the popular enthusiasm which was drawing along with it multitudes of conservative men. It caused timid and halting men to become cowards outright. It gave new life to slavery, and encouraged fiercer assaults upon abolitionism. It revived and stimulated sympathy for treason wherever it had existed."⁶¹ The removal of Fremont in the fall brot the policy of the administration into further disrepute with the radical press, particularly of the Northwest.⁶² Discontent was quite general over the whole country. It was at this time that Greeley wrote "The Prayer of Twenty Millions."⁶³ In his reply the abolitionists thot the President put himself on a level with Douglas and Buchanan by showing himself indifferent to the fate of the slaves. They considered that he had abandoned the humanitarian principles of the party.⁶⁴ The protests found general and wide spread expression both in Congress and in the press and must have had some influence on Lincoln

60. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 167.

61. Julian, Political Recollections, pp. 199-200.

62. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, pp. 189-90.

63. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 220.

64. Ibid, p. 221.

because in September he issued his preliminary proclamation of emancipation. Julian gives a report of a talk which he had with Lincoln in the fall in which Lincoln said, "My Proclamation was to stir the country; but it has done about as much harm as good." At the time it was issued, Lincoln fully expected a form of colonization to be the complement of it. If he had known that this colonization scheme was to fail, there is good reason to doubt that he would have issued it.⁶⁵

The foregoing gives one some idea of how much effort the radicals had to put forth in order to secure emancipation as a war measure. For as a matter of fact, the proclamation of the President went no farther than that of Fremont and others. A further fight was necessary to secure real abolition of slavery. At that time, Lincoln thot the negroes "could never be recognized or admitted to be our equals."⁶⁶ The Republicans as a "party only espoused the cause of the Negro under the whip and spur of military necessity, and not the promptings of humanity,"⁶⁷ is the verdict of one of the original Republicans. This is quite different from what might have been expected, judging the fact that it was supposed to have doomed the institution of slavery by the Chicago platform.

The land reform, as accomplished at this time, did not meet the requirements of the old Free Soilers. It was good

65. Welles, Diary, Vol. 1, pp. 150-3.

Julian, Political Recollections, pp. 226-7.

66. Welles, Diary, Vol. 1, p. 152.

67. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 347.

enough in principle, but it failed to accomplish the very thing which it aimed at -- homes for the homeless. This caused it to be condemned. The method of administering the law permitted speculators and monopolists to secure nearly all the land. Such men as Julian and Greeley were emphatic in their denunciation of this practice.⁶⁸ The President's stand against the confiscation of the fee of rebel landowners was considered too conservative, and it was considered to be aristocratic in its tendencies. Altho measures to get at the fees were several times passed by the two Houses, they never became law.

In the main, the various liberal questions which had interested many of the reformers of the party may be said to have been completely ignored thru this period, partly because of the war, and partly because of the difficulty of securing them, especially negro emancipation.

From the very start of the administration, there began to develop a general discontent with the administration. This grew gradually into actual distrust of the members directly connected with it. This first secured headway after the fall of Fort Sumter. The radical Republicans first "began to distrust Mr. Seward, who no longer seemed to them the hero of principle they had so long idolized. ---- He impressed his old anti-slavery friends as a deeply disappointed man, who was in danger of being morally lost." "Their faith was even a little shaken in Mr.

68. Julian, Political Recollections, pp. 216-46.
The Nation, Aug. 31, 1865.

Chase." Sumner, altho not directly connected with the administration, came in for his share of the distrust because he advocated a place on the Supreme Bench for Crittenden.⁶⁹ In 1861, the radicals had felt very well satisfied with Mr. Lincoln's action in giving the first cabinet position to Seward. By the end of Sixty-two, the discontent with and the distrust of him had grown to such an extent that a Republican caucus almost unanimously demanded his resignation from the cabinet. A committee composed of the oldest and most prominent Republican Senators was sent to Lincoln to secure the resignation.⁷⁰ Grimes, Sumner, and Trumbull are reported to have been "pointed, emphatic, and unequivocal in their opposition to Mr. Seward, whose zeal and sincerity in this conflict they doubted." Mr. Stevens at one of the meetings of the Committee on the Conduct of the War (April 13, 1862) "declared that not a man in the cabinet ---- was fit for his business."⁷¹

This same year saw a considerable political defeat for the party in power. The President and the radicals differed as to the cause. The former said there were three causes - the Republicans had gone to war and left the Democrats at home. The military defeats caused lack of enthusiasm. The vilifying and disparagement of the radicals gave the Democrats something to

69. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 195.

70. Welles, Diary, Vol. 1, pp. 194-6. The committee was Collamer, Fessenden, Harris, Trumbull, Grimes, Howard, Sumner, Pomeroy, and Wade.

71. Julian, Political Recollections, pp. 211-12.

work with.⁷² The radicals came back, however, with the retort that the defeat was "the administration's own fault."⁷³ The "Union movement" and the lack of vigorous action, they said were the real causes. One of these in a letter to Lincoln frankly stated, "Many Republicans ---- disturbed and confused by the almost universal feeling of the necessity of a change, either voted against you or withheld their votes. I know this to be a fact."⁷⁴ But unfortunately the administration was not yet "prepared to divorce itself entirely from the madness that still enthralled the conservative element of the Republican party."⁷⁵

During the whole period there were numerous additions to the party. On the part of the administration and a certain group these were welcomed with outstretched arms and everything done to make them comfortable. From the beginning a position on slavery had been taken which they could support if they were not too much in sympathy with the South. The war had been declared to have as its sole purpose the preservation of the Union. The administration had declared itself indifferent as to whether or not slavery was preserved with the Union. And there were gratuitous disavowals of abolition on the part of many Republican leaders. Democrats were given high positions in the Army

72. Schurz, Writings, Vol. 1, p.212. Lincoln to Schurz, Nov. 10, 1862.

73. Ibid, p.209. Schurz to Lincoln, Nov. 8, 1862.

74. Ibid, p.215. Schurz to Lincoln, Nov. 20, 1862.

75. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 223.

and were soon influential in Republican councils. For instance, Stanton, who had held a cabinet position under Buchanan, was made Secretary of War in 1862.

The whole attitude was summed up in what is generally called the Border State Policy. This was eminently successful in attracting large numbers of conservative men to the party. In fact, the followers of Bell and Breckinridge in the North are considered to have gone over almost en masse to the Republicans where some of them "have since obtained distinction, both for their radicalism and success in obtaining office."⁷⁶ Republican newspapers of the time asserted that out of six major-generals, five were Democrats and out of the hundred ten generals eighty were Democrats.⁷⁷ Among these were such men as Dix, Logan, Butler, and Grant. These last three are now scarcely ever thot of as anything but Republicans.

There was a large number attracted to the party, also, because it was the winning one and their object was the securing of some of the spoils. To Julian it sometimes appeared as if the love of office alone constituted the animating principle of the party.⁷⁸ Giddings considered that many such had joined the party in the election of 1860. With the immense number of contracts and the unlimited opportunities for graft during the war, it is safe to say that the number joining for this reason is

76. Davidson and Stuve, History of Illinois, p. 718.

77. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 206.

78. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 194.

beyond estimation. They are also rather hard to locate. The love of the Union was always a possible cause of joining the party and the reasons stated are not easily disproved. But beyond a doubt, the report of the Committee on Government Contracts proves that these patriotic sentiments were often lost sight of by these men.⁷⁹ In the light of his cotton transactions while in New Orleans, there may be a certain irony in Butler's declaration that "no right-minded man could be sent to New Orleans without returning an unconditional anti-slavery man."⁸⁰ Koerner says that "there were plenty of very warm Union men who yet sought to make very large profits out of their patriotism."⁸¹

As early as July, 1861, the House felt it necessary to appoint a committee to investigate the letting of government contracts. This committee reported in December and the conditions which it found were appalling. It found and reported that there had been the most flagrant violation of the law which required that bids and proposals should be submitted for contracts. In most cases contracts were let without asking for bids. Even when bids were submitted, favorites were given the contracts just the same. The only excuse offered for this was that the public exigency required it. But what was considered worse, private individuals without any official connection were given

79. Cong. Globe, Vol. 32, pt. 1, pp. 710-4.

80. Pollard, The Lost Cause, p. 257; Speech by at New York, Jan. 8, 1863. Rhodes, Hist. of the U.S. Vol. 5, p. 277.

81. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 168.

the power to make contracts when there were already officers to do the work. The most noted example of this was that of a Mr. Cummings who had placed at his disposal two million dollars and who effected for his own benefit the purchase of twenty-one thousand dollars worth of straw hats and linen pantaloons. When he found he could not get a clearance for them, he generously sold them to the government, altho the army had no use for them whatsoever. He also placed at his private disposal one hundred sixty thousand dollars.

The committee found that George D. Morgan, a brother-in-law of Secretary Welles was making an annual income of a quarter million dollars on the government contracts. He had already made ninety thousand dollars when the committee reported. As a rule these contracts were given to men who made no investment of their own and ran no financial risk, but simply clipped a certain profit from each contract. An example is that of Child, Pratt, and Fox, which secured a million-dollar contract for hardware and then bot from the very firm which had previously offered to sell to the government direct, but had been turned down. This Company did not even specify the price to be paid. Thurlow Weed was found to have received five percent on powder contracts let by the War Department, altho he did nothing except interview the Secretary about the matter.⁸²

These and many other cases of corruption disclosed by

82. Cong. Globe, Vol. 32, pt. 1, pp. 710-4.

the committee called forth the condemnation of Republicans both in the House and in the Senate. In the latter, among those most opposed to this sort of thing was Trumbull. He stated that he had received much complaint from his constituents.⁸³ It was felt that the men involved in this corruption were not the men who were originally connected with the party and that many were those who had just come into the party and were not even always loyal. The officers in charge of the Army had many contracts to let. Since these were to a large extent former Democrats, the corruption which they practiced was exceedingly distasteful to old Republicans. For instance, the United States Marshall for the Southern District of Illinois wrote the following to Trumbull. "Large contracts for horses and mules are let without any public notice and at extravagantly high figures, as is charged, and men not very loyal get all the contracts.---The business ought to be taken away from them. ----- Some member of Van Wyck's Committee (on government contracts) ought to come here and look into contracts. ----- Butler, Dubois, and others are swearing most terribly at matters here." He further asked Trumbull to see Stanton and have something done about it.⁸⁴

There was still a third type attracted to the party

83. Cong. Globe, Vol. 32, pt. 1, p. 308.

84. Trumbull Correspondence, Phillips to Trumbull, March 22, 1862.

after the outbreak of the war. This was the class to whom the business possibilities and privileges appealed. During the years 1856 - 60, the business men of the country were opposed to the growing strength of the Republican party.⁸⁵ They shrank from "the precipice to which mad factionists"⁸⁶ were leading the country. The results of the election of 1860, they considered "a blight upon the market,"⁸⁷ and the announcement of the presidential election in November produced a financial panic.⁸⁸ With the inauguration and the conservative policy then announced, this feeling gradually disappeared. The business which soon developed in connection with the war also did much to assuage business.⁸⁹

Early in the war Mr. Chase had made connections with the bankers of New York. Shortly after the Battle of Bull Run, he went to New York and met them. He made a special appeal to them to lend the government their support. They came to the government's aid - at 12 percent !⁹⁰ Another illustration of the growing connections of business with the party, was this fact. Thruout the war, J. P. Morgan was able to keep "the house of Peabody and Company (in London) thoroughly informed, not only merely about the work of the Army, but also concerning the financial condition of the country, our sources of strength, our ability to meet any taxation, and the certainly that no ruinous issues

85. Hunt's Merchant's Magazine, 1856 - 60.

86. Ibid, Oct. 1856, p. 456.

87. Ibid, Jan. 1861, p.

88. Ibid, Feb. 1861, p. 196.

89. Ibid, Oct. 1861, p. 434.

90. Hovey, J. P. Morgan, pp. 41-2.

of government bonds would ever be made."⁹¹ Peabody and Company had furnished Adams with Five Million dollars in gold. This was to enable him to stop the construction of privateers in English waters.⁹² The repeal of the Gold Act of 1864 shows the influence which business was coming to have in the party.⁹³

The system of trade permits adopted for trading with the enemy was also a means in attracting certain interests of the country. There was a very extensive trade with the enemy and since their issuance was often a matter of favoritism, there can be no doubt that they were important in securing Republican support, especially since the authority to issue them was delegated to the subordinate officers of the departments.⁹⁴ Welles in writing of these permits, says, "the prize is great. Civil-ians, quasi-military men, etc., are interested - men of political influence. Dix has already made three distinct visits to Wash-ington on the subject."⁹⁵

According to the committee, this state of affairs existed particularly in the Treasury Department, the War Depart-ment and the Navy Department. It was most influential in attract-ing to the party a number of rogues and Knaves. These continued with the party and later forced many original Republicans to leave it. Because these Knaves had become so well intrenched, they could not oust them, so such men as Julian left the party.

91. Hovey, J. P. Morgan, p. 43.

92. Ibid, p. 40.

93. Ibid, pp. 43-5.

94. Welles, Diary, Vol. 1, pp. 498, 536.

95. Ibid, p. 183.

IV

The Radical Disaffection of 1863 - 4

The administration believed that the political defeat of 1862 was due to a too radical position. From then on it inaugurated a more vigorous union movement, which finally culminated in changing the name of the convention in 1864 from Republican to Union. The "supporters of the administration, following the lead of Mr. Lincoln himself," from then on "systematically avoided resort to the name and traditions of the Republican party."¹ Coincident with this there came a decided reaction against the administration which later resulted in the Cleveland Convention. While there had been discontent with the administration before this, it was only from sixty-three on that it became serious and at times almost violent. The Union movement was only one of the many causes. There was a decided protest against the military policy, too. The New Testament method of carrying on the war with a rifle in one hand and an olive branch in the other was emphatically condemned. Uncomplimentary comparisons between Lincoln and Jackson were drawn.²

The military defeats of this year did much towards augmenting this defection.³ The discontented elements of the

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1. Dunning, Am. Hist. Rev., Vol. 16, p. 57.
 2. Cole, Era of the Civil War, p. 314.
 3. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 211.

party thot these were the administration's own fault. "Let us be commanded by generals whose heart is in the war, and only such," was their cry. "Let every general who does not show himself strong enough to command success, be disposed at once." ⁴ They considered that a large number of officers had been kept in charge long after their uselessness had been demonstrated, "merely because their removal would offend the opposition." ⁵ They believed this was the real cause of the failures in the field. They were frustrated in their attempt to get them removed. An example of this is that of McClellan.

With the approach of the presidential election in 1864 there arose in the minds of many the question whether or not Lincoln should be renominated. There were those who opposed it on principle and those who opposed it on the matter of expediency. The former came from that group which had thruout the war period considered the administration (and Lincoln as the embodiment of it) as too vacillating and hesitating, to meet their approval. The latter came from those who, reading the signs of the times, thot the reelection of Lincoln impossible, and so were willing to nominate another candidate. ⁶ This group when they saw his popular support was ready to renominate him and promote his election.

The opposition to the nomination was "secretly cherished by many of the ablest and most patriotic men in the party." ⁷

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4. Schurz, Writings, Vol. 1, p. 210. Shurz to Lincoln, Nov. 8, 1862.
 5. The Nation, Oct. 11, 1866, p. 291.
 6. McClure, Our Presidents, p. 183.
 7. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 238.

Trumbull said that it was surprising to find in^{speaking} with public men at Washington "how few, when you come to get at their real sentiments, are for Mr. Lincoln's reelection."⁸ Such men as Chase, Wade, H. W. Davis, Greeley, Sumner, Pomeroy, Julian, Stevens, Trumbull, and many others did not favor it. It is said that of the more earnest and thorough-going Republicans in Congress not one in ten really favored it.⁹ A public meeting convened at Washington appointed a committee which issued the "Pomeroy Circular". Pomeroy declared in the Senate that this embraced the views of the National Committee on the subject.¹⁰ This was only one manifestation of the Chase boom.¹¹ Lincoln's friends soon secured evidence of this movement,¹² and were able to create a certain reaction thru "vigorous and counter measures."¹³ The whole movement was fearfully mismanaged is the verdict of one who was in a position to know.¹⁴ As a result the Chase boom fell thru.

But the opposition to the renomination did not cease. Among the Republican newspapers which were opposed to it were the New York "Tribune," the New York "Evening Post," the "Independent," "Brownson's Review," and many others thruout the country.¹⁵ The President's letter to Hodges in April was further cause for complaint. The radicals declared that "it was the

8. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 218. Trumbull to H.G. McPike, Feb. 6, 1864.

9. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 243.

10. Republican Opinions About Lincoln, 1864, p. 1.

11. Welles, Diary, Vol. 1, p. 525.

12. Ibid, p. 529.

13. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 237.

14. Ibid, p. 237.

15. Republican Opinions About Lincoln, 1864, p.

duty of the President ---- to lead, not follow public opinion."¹⁶

The Cleveland Convention met on May 31st. By meeting before the Baltimore Convention, it was hoped to crystalize the opposition against Lincoln before his nomination. The nomination of Lincoln was a foregone conclusion and it was thot the most effective way to meet it was to get a radical candidate in the field first.¹⁷ But for the most part the convention lacked practical leadership. It was composed to a large extent of liberal and radical Germans who had become thoroughly disgusted with Lincoln. This same group had given hardy support to Fremont in 1856 and may account for his nomination at this time. There was also a group of anti-slavery men in it, such as Wade of Ohio, George Cheever of New York, William Goodell of New York, and Wendell Phillips of Massachusetts.¹⁸ These men had all been ardent advocates of abolitionism. They also had the sympathy of Ben Wade and H. W. Davis,¹⁹ and others who were not so ready to come out with their support. The coercive power of the administration was said to be very great.²⁰ Besides these, there were certain Democrats such as John Cochrane and others, of New York particularly. The violations of the Civil Liberties brot them there largely.

The "open, shameless, and unrestrained patronage"²¹

16. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 240.

17. McClure, Our Presidents, pp. 191-2.

18. McPherson, History of the Rebellion, pp. 408 et seq.

19. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 220.

20. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 244.

21. The various call for the Convention as given in McPherson, History of the Rebellion, pp. 410-1.

of the administration, a desire for "the immediate extinction of slavery throughout the whole United States by Congressional action,"²² the endorsement of the one term principle,²³ the extension of the right of suffrage as broadly as possible,²⁴ the belief that the rebellion could be repressed without infringing the rights of individuals or of States,²⁵ to bring the people to realize that while the best blood was being spilled on Southern soil in the name of liberty it had really been parted with at home,²⁶ to protest against the existing dangers to Republican institutions²⁷ were among the things which brot the men together at the Cleveland Convention. Many of these things were put in the platform and it was in advance of anything which had been advocated by the administration.

The Cleveland Convention may be said to have had certain effects on the Baltimore Convention. Having drawn away the most discontented element, it permitted greater unanimity in the nomination of Lincoln. The growing feeling that the Cleveland Convention was something to be feared may have had the result of making the Baltimore platform more advanced. There was first of all a general feeling that slavery would have to go. A plank was adopted calling for constitutional prohibition. The platform also called upon the administration to prosecute the war

22. The various calls for the Convention as given in McPherson, History of the Rebellion, pp. 410-1.

23. Ibid, p. 410.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

with the utmost possible vigor to the complete suppression of the rebellion." Any compromise attitude was likewise condemned.²⁸ Only those who endorsed the principles of the platform were considered worthy of public confidence and official trust.²⁹ Economy and rigid responsibility in the public expenditure were also recommended.³⁰ In the letter which the committee sent to Lincoln informing him of his renomination, there is just a reflection of the opposition there had been in the party on the question of Civil Liberties.³¹

During the summer the administration came to feel more and more that it might be defeated in the coming election. Lincoln himself thought there was very great likelihood of this. He made plans for cooperating with the president-elect between election and inauguration.³² With the nomination of Fremont, he thought he would lose the German vote. They "held the balance of power in Missouri, Wisconsin, and Illinois."³³ They had been very influential in his election in 1860. By the end of the summer it became evident that the radicals under Fremont could not hope to win. They had not received the general support they had looked for. The best they could do would be to throw the election to the Democrats. This was clearly recognized and it was thought the sensible thing to do was to unite in the support

28. Baltimore Platform, 1864, art. 3.

29. Ibid, art. 6.

30. Ibid, art. 8.

31. McPherson, History of the Rebellion, p. 408.

32. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 219.

33. Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 432.

of Lincoln.³⁴ By the withdrawal of Fremont, a more liberal policy was promised and the removal of one of the most objectionable members of the cabinet secured.³⁵

The radical defection was not entirely in vain. Its significance to a student of this period lies in the fact that there were certain groups in the Republican party which considered the administration's position so distasteful that they were ready to break with the party. To have prompted such action, the discontent must have been rather general and widespread.

As early as December 9, 1863, the President had outlined what he considered should be the reconstruction policy. He considered that the states should be permitted to set up governments as soon as possible. He thot the people of the states should determine suffrage qualifications. As a private suggestion to Gov. Hahn, he wrote that a few of "the very intelligent" negroes, especially those who had fought in the ranks, might be given the right to vote.³⁶

The policy as outlined was far from meeting the approval of the Republican radicals. When in the first months of 1865, the administration in accordance with this plan tried to

34. Schurz, Writings, Vol. 1, p. 349.

McPherson, History of the Rebellion, Fremont's letter of withdrawal. pp. 426-7.

35. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 248.

Koerner, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p. 433.

White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 220.

Fremont withdrew on the 21st. Lincoln asked Blair to resign on the 23rd.

36. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 233. Letter from Lincoln, March 13, 1864.

secure the admission of Louisiana, Sumner objected very strenuously. He was supported by Chandler and Wade. He was opposed to admission without a suffrage provision and was able to stave off the vote until the end of the session.³⁷

Opposition to Lincoln's plan of reconstruction had been voiced in one of the calls to the Cleveland Convention. "A Call to the Radical Men of the Nation" urged united action against the administration because of the "treachery to justice, freedom, and genuine democratic principles in its plan of reconstruction, whereby the honor and dignity of the nation have been sacrificed to conciliate the still existing and arrogant slave power."³⁸

In the summer of 1864 Henry Winter Davis introduced into the House a bill incorporating some of the radical ideas of reconstruction. It was far in advance of the position of the administration. Nevertheless this bill passed the House and was sent to the President for his signature. He, however, saw fit to veto it. This still further exasperated the "earnest and impatient Republicans" and resulted in the Wade-Davis Manifesto which "fitly echoed"³⁹ the feeling of the others. The issue whether reconstruction should be by Congress or by the executive was directly taken up in it.

It was after this widespread and very intense opposition to him by so many members of his own party, that Lincoln

37. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 187.

38. McPherson, History of the Rebellion, p. 410.

39. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 246.

made specific preparations for cooperating with the president-elect whom he was quite sure would not be himself.⁴⁰

Thus, we see that even at this early day, with Lincoln himself in the presidency, there was a growing rupture in the party over reconstruction. And it had already gravitated around the three questions which later assumed so much importance - the position of the seceded states, the position of the negro in them, and the place of Congress and the Executive in the reconstruction.

40. Nicolay and Hay, Abraham Lincoln, Vol. 9, p. 251. The Manifesto was published Aug. 5. Lincoln wrote out the memorandum Aug. 23.

V

The Succession of Andrew Johnson

With the succession of Andrew Johnson to the presidency, we enter on a period of somewhat different party leadership than under Lincoln. The period from 1860 to 1864 was unquestionably dominated by the conservative elements, with, it is true, serious, vigorous, and increasingly more frequent outbursts by the radicals; the period from 1865 to 1870 is characterized by leadership from the radical group, the more extreme members gaining greater influence as time goes on. Two forces can be seen at work promoting this state of affairs. Lincoln's dominating personality had been replaced by one whose stubbornness was equaled only by his lack of diplomacy. In the second place, the dominating factor of the war, before which all parties, all factions, had to yield, had been removed.

The nomination of Johnson came as a big surprise to many Republicans. Even those who were most closely connected with the administration were surprised.¹ It was a result of the Union movement, pointed out in chapter three. There is evidence to show that his nomination was due largely to Lincoln himself. "He hoped by this to bring into the Republican fold

1. Welles, Diary, Vol. 2, p. 44. As late as June 3, he wrote: "They will be likely to renominate Hamlin."

a large body of Democrats who had never become Republicans, such as Judge Holt, General Dix, General Butler, and Governor Johnson."² Hamlin had joined the party in 1856. His replacement was in line with the whole Union movement of the time since original Republicans were continually being replaced on the party ticket by men who had supported Bell or Breckenridge in 1860.

The replacement of Hamlin by Johnson was not popular with the radical Republicans. He had been a member of the Committee on the Conduct of the War and with the other members had urged its vigorous prosecution. This accounts for what might otherwise seem queer. Immediately after the assassination of Lincoln, it is said that "while everybody was shocked at his murder, the feeling was nearly universal that the accession of Johnson to the Presidency would prove a godsend to the country."³ In the light of after events it is curious to note that the radicals were decidedly pleased and confident of what his policy would be. The members of the Committee on the Conduct of the War called on him the day after his inauguration. One of the members present reports that Wade said, "By the gods, there will be no trouble now in running the government."⁴ It was at this time that Johnson said that "Treason must be made infamous, and

2. McClure, Our Presidents, p. 185. McClure and Cameron of Pennsylvania were both pledged to his support by Lincoln.

3. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 243.

4. Ibid, p. 257.

traitors be impoverished."⁵ This satisfaction with Johnson and trust in his agreement with them continued for a short time. Carl Schurz, in a letter to Sumner on May 9th, wrote, "I had a very full conversation with the President yesterday ---. The objects he aims at are all that the most progressive friends of human liberty can desire."⁶ Likewise at a Republican caucus on May 12th "Senators Wade and Sumner both insisted that the President was in no danger (from the conservatives) and declared, furthermore, that he was in favor of negro suffrage."⁷ All this seems illogical in the light of the intense opposition which Johnson and his policy later met with at the hands of these very men.

They were, however, soon disillusioned. In his proclamation of May 29, Johnson definitely advocated a program which was identical to that of Lincoln's. From then on, the friction between him and the leaders of the party grew more and more pronounced. By this time there was a large group of radicals led by Sumner and Stevens who had advanced to the position of providing negro suffrage by Congressional action. In this they disagreed with the administration. They were in favor of a long period of probation, while the administration had shown itself decided on getting the states back into the Union as soon as possible. In December, the Senate called for the report of

5. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 257.

6. Schurz, Writings, Vol. 1, p. 255.

7. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 263.

Carl Schurz, which had been instigated by Johnson himself, but which did not bear out his policy of reconstruction, and did seem to substantiate the position of the radicals. Schurz thot the President would suppress his report, and thru agreement with Sumner,⁸ it was arranged to be called for by the Senate. In the light of this report, Congress passed the "Freedmen's Bureau Bill." It was followed by the "Civil Rights Bill." Both of these measures were sponsored by Trumbull of Illinois. They were also favored by Fessenden of Maine. They were attempts to make effective the 13th amendment which had been declared ratified on December 18th, 1865. President Johnson vetoed both measures. The "Civil Rights Bill" was then passed over the veto.⁹ The real break now came between the President and Congress. In the elections in the Fall, the position of Congress was upheld. However, this was not by any means due to the fact that the country endorsed the radical position. Johnson's personality played as large a part as anything in driving the "essentially thoughtful and conservative element" of the party into the arms of the radicals. There was further the question which had cropped up under Lincoln, the question as to whether reconstruction was primarily an executive or legislative matter. At that time the Wade-Davis Manifesto had declared that if the President wishes "our support he must confine himself to his

8. Schurz, Writings, Vol. 1, p. 27. Sumner to Schurz, Nov. 13, 1865.

9. Cong. Globe, Vol. 36, pp. 1809, 1863.

executive duties --- to obey and to execute, not make the laws, ----- and leave political recognition to Congress."¹⁰ This was the position of many men in 1866 who, while they did not believe in going as far as some of the radicals, did feel that it was a matter for Congress and not for the Executive. These men said: "Lose no opportunity of keeping the real issue before the country, letting the people hear constantly what it is that is involved in the plan of reconstruction which Mr. Johnson is urging forward, what its dangers are, what the limits of his authority are; and what are his true relations to Congress."¹¹

There is noticeable in the development of the period these four factors - a vindictive feeling on the part of some leaders who urged the punishment of the South; a humanitarian motive prompting some to secure the rights of the negroes; a reaction against Johnson's personality by those who otherwise favored the position he took on reconstruction; and a protest against executive usurpation. At times the membership of these groups overlap, first one way, then another. Seldom does any group emerge and stand out clearly on any one of these reasons. There is a continual shifting of position among the men and the motives actuating them during this period.

10. Nicolay and Hay, Abraham Lincoln, Vol. 9, p. 125.

11. The Nation, March 8, 1866, p. 294.

VI

The Forces at Work within the Party - 1865-1870

In this period there gradually emerged from the Republican leadership what may truly be called a Liberal group. The majority of the members of this group had, during the war period, consistently acted with the radicals. During this period they acted at times with the radicals, at other times with the conservatives. Toward the end of the decade they were almost entirely alienated from the controlling group of the radical reconstructionists just as they had been from the administration in 1864, but for the opposite reason. A number of them were later identified with the Liberal Republican Movement.

Early in the Spring of 1866, the "Nation" had urged the people to oppose the President's plan of reconstruction.¹ By September, it had already voiced a protest against the extreme position to which some of the leaders were going. This was aimed particularly at the vindictive spirit of these men. It said, "We ought to stop --- at once and forever that rant about the Southerners 'having forfeited their lives by their rebellion' which we are sorry to see Mr. Stevens has just been

1. The Nation, March 8, 1866, p. 294.

repeating at Bedford, and which a good many people with more moderation than he now and then indulge in."² In the same year Col. B. Gratz Brown, "a prominent Republican and former United States Senator had begun agitation intended ultimately to remove all restrictions from Southerners."³ He had signed one of the calls for the Cleveland Convention. It is interesting to note in this connection that Fremont in accepting the nomination of this convention had said "In the adjustments which are to follow peace, no considerations of vengeance can consistently be admitted."⁴

By 1867 this reaction to the radical domination had become more emphatic. In July, under the title of "True Radicalism" the Nation makes this significant statement: "Many well meaning persons ---- are so anxious to be considered 'radical' in their views that they fear to stop even when they have attained all that is really desirable or practicable." It considered that the errors of such action were likely to create a "reaction against wise reforms" and so it felt called upon to give a "few words of advice to those who feel troubled by such fears."⁵ In August, it said "when Brownlow and his loyalists devoted themselves for two years to cursing, abusing, and 'running off' the Tennessean rebels, we could not greatly blame

2. The Nation, Sept. 13, 1866, p. 210.

3. Haynes, Third Parties, p. 9.

4. McPherson, History of the Rebellion, p. 414.

5. The Nation, July 18, 1867, pp. 51-2.

them. Now however, they have a majority of voters on their side; they have proved their ability to keep order at the polls, and we submit that the country is fairly entitled to expect something from them in the way of pacification and conciliation."⁶

There was a move during this year by the radical leaders to get a line on the true position of Grant. Up to this time he had supported the administration. In 1865 he had given a report of the conditions at the South which had supported Johnson's position.⁷ In November, Wade is reported to have said that "he had tried to find out whether Grant was for Congress or for Johnson, or what the devil he was for, but never could get anything out of him, for as quick as he'd talk politics, Grant would talk horse."⁸ The Philadelphia "Morning Post" warned the radicals to keep clear of him and "to meet silence with silence more profound."

By 1868 the readiness with which the radicals took up any radical and extreme measure which came along was receiving general condemnation. It was pointed out in July that the Stevenses and Butlers, Wades and the like "had ceased to be fit guides for the Republican party and would eventually lead it into the ditch."⁹ Even the New York "Tribune", which had up to this time supported them, was forced to repudiate them. Its

6. The Nation, August 8, 1867, p. 110.

7. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 252.

8. The Nation, Nov. 14, 1867, quoted from the "Commercial," p. 386.

9. Ibid, July 23, 1868, p. 62.

comments on Thaddeus Stevens in July were said to have been a model of "plain dealing."¹⁰ The chief reaction to these leaders came in connection with the impeachment of Johnson. This will be considered later.

The years between 1865 and 1870 saw on the part of certain liberal groups a disposition to stop and consider just where they should be, just what position it was logical for them to take. There was a growing tendency to criticise the management of the party, to make it conform more nearly to what they would have it. This of course was severely condemned by those in control who continued to protest that rebels would gain control if the whole party ticket was not elected and that the Union would again be in danger. In commenting on this practice a Republican Journal wrote, "people who preach morality at this period (before elections) are generally pronounced by 'practical politicians' either fools or traitors, and are urged, as we have been ourselves, to stop sermonizing till the election is over."¹¹ In spite of this danger there was a disposition on the part of some of the members to criticise. The elections of 1867 in which the Republican party was estimated to have lost 107,000 of the majority which it had had the year before, shows that this was true. It was thot that about 160,000 Republicans who had voted the year before, simply stayed home; since they could not vote

10. The Nation, July 23, 1868, p. 62.

11. Ibid.

either ticket they refused to vote at all.¹² Some of the leading newspapers, the New York "Tribune" among them, frankly advised the voters not only to "scratch" but to "bolt."¹³

Of more importance and of greater significance during these years was the feeling on the part of some, that the Republican party had actually changed its character. Not only had it changed its policies and principles to a large extent, but even the men now dominating it were not true Republicans. During the war period these changes had occurred, but the men involved in the events of that day could give very little attention to the matter. All their energies were directed to the prosecution of the war. It was only after the war that there was a sort of breathing space in which to consider just where events had led them. As early as 1865 there was a start in this direction. It was noticed at that time that "the party of the administration is composed of men as different as the late Edward Everett, General Butler, John A. Griswold, Thurlow Weed, and Charles Sumner, who were respectively leaders of the Bell-Everett, the Breckenridge, the Douglas parties and both wings of the Republican party."¹⁴ There was also developed at this time an appreciation of the situation as it had been during the war. The Republican party "drove its leaders before it through the war, not wanting to be led by any man" was the judgment in 1866.

12. The Nation, Nov. 14, 1867, p. 395.

13. Ibid, Oct. 31, 1867, p. 355.

14. Harper's Weekly, Feb. 25, 1865.

There was an attempt in 1867 to define definitely the principles which had been instrumental in the formation of the party and to advocate them as the principles then. "It is not the party of 'equal suffrage' or of any other political pill or tonic" it was declared. "It is the party of good government, of virtue, knowledge, and understanding."¹⁵ At the same time, it was said that there were strong indications that the men of influence were finding out to what the trouble in the party was due. On consideration it was concluded that the defeats of 1867 were caused by the "apathy or temporary disgust of Republicans" and that it was possible by continuing the prevailing tactics, to drive into the opposite ranks those who had simply stayed home that year.¹⁶

In 1868 came the real recognition that the leaders prominent in the party were not the same as those in its early history, that many of the men who had been identified with the party were entirely out of it or else discredited with it. This recognition led to considerable animosity toward the leaders then prominent in the party. For instance, the "Nation" in speaking of Wade about this time, calls him "the old war horse."¹⁷ A week later it speaks of Stevens and Butler as "two demagogues."¹⁸ In July it referred to Mr. Logan and Mr. Butler as "Those two good old Democrats."¹⁹ It summed up the growing opinion among

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- 15. The Nation, Oct. 31, 1867, p. 355.
 - 16. Ibid, Oct. 17, 1867, p. 315.
 - 17. Ibid, May 21, 1868, p. 403.
 - 18. Ibid, May 28, 1868, p. 427.
 - 19. Ibid, July 9, 1868, p. 21.

the Liberal Republican leaders in the following paragraph. "Since the outbreak of the war the Republican party has been joined by a large number of recruits who have no mental or moral affinity with the party, who are not men of conscience or of ideas, and who belong to it because it is the winning party, and because it has been the national party, but who have no sympathy with reforming and progressive tendencies, and who have no idea of leading it on any but the old democratic principle of 'open your mouth and shut your eyes!'"²⁰ The opinion was further expressed that "some of the recruits which the Republican party enlisted during the war will kill it before long, if it does not manage to give them a discharge."²¹ It was felt that too much importance had been given to such men as Butler, Logan, and Cobb, while men like Trumbull, Fessenden, Dixon, Norton, Doolittle, and Grimes were becoming discredited, altho they had been among the early Republican leaders. Three of them had felt they could no longer act with the party and had gone over to the Democrats.

The policy of utility or expediency which had come to be one of the primary characteristics of the Republican party by this time also came in for its share of criticism. The party was in the main dominated by moral ideas, but it was maintained that the leaders failed to appreciate this fact. This was fruitful of much agitation for a return to the original principles of the party. This protest against the policy of expediency had

20. The Nation, July 2, 1868, p. 5.

21. Ibid, p. 1.

been one of the principles which Republican leaders had urged before they came into power.²² Speaking of the situation in 1866 one Republican leader who had been prominent in the party from the start said, "Great and far-reaching interests were at stake, but they were made the sport of politicians, and disposed of in the light of their supposed effect upon the ascendancy of the Republican party. Statesmanship was sacrificed to party management."²³ By 1867 it was demanded that these policies be thrown overboard and a return made to the original principles of the party. "It must, in order to do its duty" it was said, "discard at once the idea that it may or must use the same means that the Democratic party has been in the habit of using. ----- It must abandon the Democratic plan of throwing dust in the peoples' eyes,"²⁴ and many other of the abnoxious habits it had become accustomed to use. "If the respectable portion of the party does not speak out strongly and speedily, there will be a disaster sooner or later, and throwing the blame on the weak-kneed will not mend matters"²⁵ was the prevailing opinion of this group.

The most violent denunciation came over the corrupt practices which had crept into the party during the war when the large number of contracts at the government's disposal attracted all the knaves and rogues in the North to its support. When the war was over this same state of affairs continued. The liberal

22. cf. Schurz, Writings, Vol. 1, p. 65.

23. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 306.

24. The Nation, Oct. 31, 1867.

25. Ibid, July 2, 1868.

elements of the party, when they realized the situation, were for cleaning house. In 1865 a personal dispute between Greeley and Weed was the occasion for airing the extent to which such practices had gone. Greeley in one of his articles speaks of "that shameful, pernicious, systematic traffic in legislation, franchises, grants and immunities whereby Thurlow Weed has become rich and infamous." "This is perfectly plain speaking" is the comment made on the article by one magazine.²⁶

In 1867 there was still further realization of the condition and demands for reform. "In California the Republican party has suffered itself to be led by notorious knaves, who while waving their hats for Congress and the black man with one hand, had the other thrust up to the elbow in the state treasury" is the verdict of a magazine which consistently supported the Republican party.²⁷

In 1868 it was declared that "for years, no knave, however notorious, has ever been put up for election that the party editors have not come forward and assured their readers on the word of a patriot, that if he was not elected the country would be ruined; that the enemy was at the gates, and had to be defeated, before the work of purification could be begun."²⁸ Now was the time to secure these changes, was the opinion of the liberals. For it was said "there is in the ranks of the Republican party

26. The Nation, Aug. 31, 1865, p. 265.

27. Ibid, Oct. 19, 1867, p. 232.

28. Ibid, July 2, 1868, p. 5.

a vast body of persons to whom the condition of the public service and the growing power of money in both politics and law, are matters of serious concern."²⁹

It was a big question as to what men who desired reform should do. To continue to vote the Republican ticket would not improve matters; while to vote the Democratic ticket was felt to be even worse. "It is alleged that the Republican party, as an organization, has become as corrupt as the Democratic; that its managers are lobbyists and its chosen legislators venal; that Republican revenue officers defraud the treasury of millions and a Republican Senate keeps them in office, while a Republican House of Representatives kills every proposition for reform in the civil service." "And in substance the Republican party must plead guilty to these charges," was the decision of one of the party.³⁰

To summarize, during the period between sixty-five and seventy, there was a growing reaction to the extreme radical position by certain groups which might truly be called liberal. There was also on the part of this element a tendency to stop and consider their position, to see just where they stood in relation to affairs. In the main, they decided that the party had during the war undergone considerable change, and that the party of 1868 was not the party of 1856-60, either as to policies and

29. The Nation, July 16, 1868, p. 46.

30. Ibid, July 30, 1868, p. 84.

principles or as to the men dominating it. When this was realized there was agitation for a return to the principles which had actuated the party in its early days. The first step in this direction they felt was the abolition of the corrupt practices which had become one of the chief characteristics of the party.

As has been pointed out in chapter four, the reform element in the party had during the war period been forced to direct all its energies to prosecuting the war and securing a suitable settlement of the negro question. After 1865, both of these engrossing subjects were removed, the one entirely, the other partially. It was then that proper that the other great questions which had been in "abeyance during this great struggle"³¹ should be taken up and brot to the attention of the public for proper settlement. As early as the summer of sixty-five there was a feeling that the negro question had absorbed the attention long enough. "Everybody" it was declared, "is heartily tired of discussing his condition and his rights."³² The idea was growing that other matters should now receive consideration.

One of the first questions to be taken up was that of the tariff. As has been pointed out in chapter 2, the so-called protective plank in the Chicago platform of 1860 was worded in such a way as to secure both those who did and those who did not favor protection. There were certain groups in the East which

31. The Nation, July 18, 1867, p. 51.

32. Ibid, July 6, 1865, p. 1.

it was necessary to placate with such a plank.³³ But there was a large group in the party which was not only not in favor of protection but frankly desired a tariff for revenue only. For the sake of unity they had yielded the point in 1860. During the war duties were carried to such an extreme that many of these were for abandoning the principle altogether now. The men from the Northwest took this ground earlier because there, the effects of the tariff were most felt. As early as 1865 it was generally recognized that there was "the utmost radical difference" upon the tariff question among the Republican leaders.³⁴ It was thot at that time that "the fundamental problem of protection and free trade" would be one of the things on which parties would be formed.³⁵

The high duties had become associated in the public mind with the maintenance of the public credit. But the high handed and sordid way in which tariff legislation was carried thru Congress became more and more a matter of grave concern and it was prophesied that it would before long be the cause of "a violent reaction against the whole protective system."³⁶ It was becoming evident by 1866 that "the real work of drawing" up such legislation "was done in the lobby, and consisted ---- in an elaborate effort to appease the various 'interests' whose agents and deputies besieged the committee room, and cajoled, or threatened, or seduced the members."³⁷

33. Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, Vol. 1, pp. 203-14.

34. Harper's Weekly, Feb. 25, 1865.

35. Ibid.

36. The Nation, July 5, 1866, p. 10.

37. Ibid.

In this same year the group collecting around B. Gratz Brown in Missouri declared for a revenue tariff. In Illinois there was also a growing desire that the protective principle should be abandoned as "mischievous." In this State such Republican leaders as Ray, Medill, White, Larned, and others formed a league to keep Congress from running the protection theory into the ground.³⁸

By 1868 the opposition had assumed great dimensions. In this year was organized the "American Freetrade League" whose members were in favor of only a protective tariff. Many of these men were among those who were prominent in the Republican party. They were such men as Field and Tilden, who had been old Free Soilers, Wm. C. Bryant, Wm. L. Garrison, Horace White, and Carl Schurz.³⁹ In fact, the opposition was so strong this year that the Republican Convention did not put a tariff plank in its platform.⁴⁰ But this did not alter the situation very much and the tariff question was one of the forces back of the Liberal Republican movement in 1872.

There was a general renewal of the questions which had interested the members before the war. The rights of labor, land reform, woman suffrage, and civil service reform were some of those receiving attention. But the dominating group was hostile to such measures and they failed to become party measures. One of the most frequent complaints of such men as Julian was that the party refused to advance enough to take up these problems.

38. Cole, Era of the Civil War, pp. 409-10. Ray to Trumbull, Jan. 15, 1866.

39. Haynes, Third Parties, p. 12.

40. Proceedings of the Nat'l. Union Rep. Con. 1868, pp. 84-5.

Curious as it may sound, the impeachment of Andrew Johnson brot about by the extreme radicals, was the rock on which the various elements of the party split. From that time on, while the liberal group still continued to vote with the radicals on various measures, a division can be definitely traced. To them the situation at the impeachment verified the conclusion at which they had been gradually arriving as to the true character of the party.

In the summer of 1867 the President saw fit to remove Stanton and Grant took his place. It was over this question that the President was finally impeached. The President's personality and stubbornness played into the hands of the radicals. On February 24th the House, which had rejected the recommendation of the Judiciary Committee in December, now by a vote of 128 to 47 adopted the same resolutions. At this time every Republican member present voted in the affirmative.⁴¹ Articles of impeachment were prepared and the trial began on March 5th.

While at first the country had flared up over what it considered an act of executive usurpation, "the impeachers lost ground in the estimation of the sober-minded and reflective classes by their intemperate language, by their efforts to bring outside pressure to bear upon Senators."⁴² It became more and more evident that the impeachment had been purely a party matter.

When the articles came up for voting, seven Republican senators voted against the eleventh article which was the first

41. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 309.

42. Ibid, p. 312.

one voted on. They were Henderson, Trumbull, Fessenden, Grimes, Ross, Fowler, and Van Winkle. Besides these there were twelve Senators who had formerly been with the Republican party but who had gone over to the Democrats before this. They included such men as Doolittle, Dixon, and Norton.⁴³ The utmost pressure was brot to bear on some of the seven to change their vote, but it was not effective. In fact, if it had been necessary, there were other Senators ready to vote against impeachment.⁴⁴

The immediate effect of the action of the "seven traitors" was to cause them to be ostracized by the radicals who now dominated the party. The New York "Tribune" contained a flagrant attack on Grimes, Trumbull, and Fessenden. Charles Spencer said he would advise Trumbull not to appear at the Chicago Convention for fear he would be lynched.⁴⁵ Later a committee was appointed in the House to investigate the corruption of these Senators. Butler was particularly active in this matter.

But the violent treatment of Senators acting in a judicial character soon brot about a reaction. Papers which had favored the impeachment did not approve of these arbitrary measures. Among these were the "Nation." On May 21st it contained the following: "The torrent of vituperation against Messrs. Trumbull, Fessenden, and Grimes has ceased, owing to the indignation it has excited throughout the country, and the certainty it revealed that if they were driven out of the party they would take

43. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 312.
Tribune Almanac, 1868, p. 33.

44. White, Life of Lyman Trumbull, p. 321. Morgan, Sprague, and Willey pledged themselves to vote in the negative if needed.

45. Ibid, p. 315.

with them nearly everybody and everything that keeps it alive. In fact, if they and their friends were gone, the party would perish incontinently."⁴⁶

That the impeachment was not only a party matter, but that it had its personal side was also being seen. "It was generally believed" by the radicals "that Johnson would be successfully impeached; that Wade would become President for the remainder of the term, with illimitable patronage, and that his nomination for the Vice-Presidency was apparently assured." When the acquittal came "that ended Wade's candidacy."⁴⁷ In July it was thot that "the mischief which Mr. Johnson, if successful, could bring upon the country would be less than that which might have been caused in the eight months of Mr. Wade's incumbancy, by a general subversion and expulsion of office holders such as we know to have been planned with all minuteness."⁴⁸

The nomination of Grant by the Republican Convention of 1868 was a matter of expediency. He was the only candidate whom it was thot could secure the cooperation of all the groups. This was not because of any principles which he advocated or any stand he took on the questions of the day, but because of his military record. He had been considered a possibility by the Democrats, and this would have been a much more logical place for him since he never voted a Republican ticket until after he had been a Republican President for eight years.⁴⁹

46. The Nation, May 21, 1868, p. 402.

47. McClure, Our Presidents, pp. 210-11.

48. The Nation, July 30, 1868, p. 83.

49. McClure, Our Presidents, p. 202.

In the Republican platform of this year there was a plank calling for "radical reform" of the corruption which existed then in the party and for strict economy in the administration of the government.⁵⁰ The liberal elements in the party felt this would be a test of whether or not the party intended to reform. But something more than mere words was demanded. Mr. Jenckes had introduced a civil service bill which it was generally conceded would accomplish much reform. "As soon as we see any Republican leaders openly advocating it, as they have advocated the reconstruction acts ----- we shall believe in the sincerity of their desire for reform, but not till then" was the liberal position.⁵¹

But the reform elements were disappointed. The same policy was carried on, the old methods continued to be used. By 1870 they were convinced that a change was necessary. Julian in that year advocated what he called the "New Departure." This included a radical reform of the tariff and land policy, the emancipation of the party from the rule of great corporations and monopolies, an adequate reform of the civil service, and the adoption of the one-term principle.⁵² It became increasingly clear during these years that the party refused to move forward and take up "the living questions of the times." The intolerance of the leaders which became marked at the time of the impeachment trial became unbearable, until finally there was a concerted

50. Chicago Platform, 1868, art. 7.

51. The Nation, July 16, 1868, p. 47.

52. Julian, Political Recollections, p. 333.

action on the part of a large group which resulted in the Liberal Republican movement. By 1870 the Republicans in Missouri were definitely divided into two factions known as the Liberal and the Radical.⁵³

The Republican Party had by this time been in power ten years; it was to continue in power for fifteen years longer. Yet, during the first decade, it has been shown that the party had undergone the most drastic changes. At the beginning of the period, the party was characterized by a large element of the most radical reformers, actuated by humanitarian motives. It came out of the decade with only one of the questions settled (that of slavery) and refused to take up the questions at hand, such as woman suffrage, the rights of labor, and civil service reform. In its early history, it had been dominated by men who were interested in all these questions. After the first decade these reformers found no place in the party. When it came into power, it created a panic in the business world. During ten years of power, it had succeeded in attracting to its support a number of the business interests of the country by its preferential legislation. The wholesale jobbing in legislation and the growing importance of the lobby caused such founders of the party, as Seward, Julian, Schurz, Sumner, Greeley, and Trumbull to leave the party in order to retain their self-respect.

Under Grant such men as Morton of Indiana, Conkling of

53. Haynes, Third Parties, p. 9.

New York, Cameron of Pennsylvania, and Butler of Massachusetts were the autocrats of their respective States. Yet what had been the history of these men? Morton at the time of Lincoln's election had headed a party which refused to use the very name Republican. Conkling, altho in Congress for some time, is said never to have linked his name with any important policy or principle. Butler had been a Breckenridge man in 1860. While serving with the Army in New Orleans, he is generally credited with having made a fortune thru speculation in rebel cotton. Cameron had been forced to resign from Lincoln's cabinet because of the contract frauds in his department.

By 1872 desertion by the original members became very widespread. This included all the most prominent leaders. In Illinois alone there were ten such leaders who had been intimately connected with Lincoln. But the Liberal Republican movement was not successful and the years following 1872 saw a scattering of the elements which had been active in it. A surprisingly large number, such as Koerner and Trumbull, definitely went over to the Democrats; others, such as Schurz and Adams, went back to the Republican ranks. Regardless of which way these men went, however, they continued to agitate for reform and an advanced position on the questions then before the public.

VII

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